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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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P R 091330Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9056
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5546

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: UPDATED ELECTION RESULTS; HUERTA BACKERS SUPPORT SET

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WITH THE ELECTION RETORNO FROM 7 PROVINCES RECEIVED RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA LEADS THE OFFICIAL VOTE COUNT. THE COUNT IS MISLEADING, HOWEVER, SINCE IT INCLUDES SEVERAL PRO-HUERTA PROVINCES AND DOES NOT INCLUDE IMPORTANT PICHINCHA AND GUAYAS WHERE HE DID POORLY. THE GUAYAS SCRUTINY--WHETHER IRREGULARITIES APPEAR AND HOW THE SET DEALS WITH THEM--IN-CREASINGLY APPEARS TO BE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE RETORNO. OF POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE IS THE FACT THAT HUERTA SUPPORTERS ARE PRACTICALLY THE ONLY POLITICIANS IN RECENT DAYS TO PUBLICLY STATE THEIR APPROVAL OF THE SET'S PERFORMANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. AS OF AUGUST 8 THE SUPREME COUNCIL TRIBUNAL (SET) HAD COMPLETED ITS SCRUTINY AND ISSUED FINAL TABULATIONS OF THE VOTE FROM SEVEN OF ECUADOR'S 20 PRIVINCES. THE RESULTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, INCLUDE THE VOTE FROM ONLY SIX (CARCHI, IMBABURA, ESMERALDAS, MANABI, BOLIVAR AND NAPO), SINCE THE VOTE FROM THE SEVENTH -- COTOPAXI -- WAS ANNULED IN ITS ENTIRETY. EXCLUDING COTOPAXI A TOTAL OF 878 VOTING TABLES HAVE BEEN CERTIFIED, WITH 91 OF THEM ANNULED BY THE SET FOR VARIOUS IRREGULARITIES. RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA LEADS AT THIS POINT WITH 34.4 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, FOLLOWED BY SIXTO DURAN WITH 26.8

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PERCENT, JAIME ROLDOS WITH 20.9 PERCENT, RODRIGO BORJA WITH 8 PERCENT, ABDON CALDERON WITH 6.6 PERCENT AND RENE MAUGE WITH 3.3 PERCENT. BLANK BALLOTS (4.2 PERCENT) AND VOTER-VOIDED BALLOTS (5.8 PERCENT) MADE UP THE REMAINDER,. THE TOTAL VOTE IN THE SIX PROVINCES WAS 272,149 WHICH REPRESENTS LESS THAN 20 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE. ADDING IN AN AVERAGE TURNOUT FOR THE 91 NULLIFIED TABLES, VOTER TURNOUT IN THE FIRST SIX PROVINCES IS AROUND 83 PERCENT, APPROXIMATELY THE FIGURE INDICATED BY EARLY, INFORMAL VOTE COUNTS.

3. THE RAPID, UNEVENTFUL VOTE COUNT IN THE LAST THREE PROVINCES APPEARS TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A LESSENING OF TENSION AMONG THOSE FOLLOWING THE SET'S WORK. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MAJOR PROVINCES OF PICHINCHA AND GUAYAS HAVE NOT BEEN REVIEWED YET AND THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS OF MAJOR IRREGULARITIES IN THE LATTER. ON AUGUST 7 JAIME ROLDOS' CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES (CFP) FORMALLY REQUESTED THE SET TO CONSIDER GUAYAS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO DISPELL THE RUNORS OF FRAUD. THE BROAD POLITICAL SPECTRUM CONTINUES TO VIEW THE SET WITH A GOOD DEAL OF CONCERN. AN EMERGING EXCEPTION TO THIS GENERALITY, HOWEVER, ARE THE GROUPS WHICH SUPPORT HUERTA'S CANDIDACY. EX-PRESIDENT CARLOS JULIO AROSEMENA'S NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PNR), ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF HUERTA'S ELECTORAL FRONT, THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC UNION (UDN), HAS PUBLICLY CONFIDENTIAL

ENDORSED THE WORK OF THE SET. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, MANUEL ARAUJO HIDALGO, UDN REPRESENTATIVE AT THE SET ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 4 THAT HE WAS AUTHORIZED BY THE UDN TO COMPLIMENT THE SET ON ITS WORK AND TO SUPPORT IT IN ITS ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO IRREGULARITIES. ARAUJO'S STATEMENT PLACED THE BLAME FOR THE CONFUSION ATTENDANT ON THE VOTE SCRUTINY THUS FAR TO THE ELECTORAL LAW AND REGULATIONS WHICH IT DESCRIBED AS "CONFUSING AND CONTRADICTORY". THE STATE-MENT TOOK NOTE OF THE FACT THAT OSVALDO HURTADO, ROLDOS' RUNNING MATE, HAD CHAIRED THE COMMISSION WHICH DRAFTED THAT LAW AND REGULATION.

4. ARAUJO'S STATEMENT PRODUCED A BLAST FROM FRANCISCO HUERTA, QUONDAM PRESIDENT OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, THE MAINSTAY OF THE RAUL CLEMENTE COALITION. PANCHO CLAIMED THAT ARAUJO'S VIEWS DO NOT REPRESENT THOSE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, WHICH REMAINS VERY CONCERNED OVER THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SET.

5. COMMENT: RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA'S LEAD AT THIS POINT IS NOT SURPRISING SINCE THE SIX PROVINCES TABULATED INCLUDE THREE OF THE FOUR IN WHICH EARLY RESULTS HAD

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HIM LEADING. FOR INSTANCE, HUERTA HAS GARNERED OVER HALF OF HIS TOTAL TO DATE IN MANABI, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ALMOST 50 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL IN THE SIX PROVINCES. ARAUJO'S STATEMENT, RATHER THAN REFLECTING SATISFACTION OVER THE CURRENT STANDINGS, MAY INDICATE CONTINUED CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF HUERTA'S CLOSE ADVISORS THAT THE VOTE RESULTS WILL BE MANIPULATED IN SOME WAY IN ORDER TO QUALIFY HIM FOR THE SECOND ROUND. IT MAY ALSO INDICATE A MANEUVER TO POLARIZE AND DIVIDE THE CIVILIAN POLITICIANS, THUS STRENGTHENING THE PRETEXT FOR A MILITARY INTERVENTION AND NULLIFICATION OF THE ELECTIONS.

6. THE GUAYAS VOTE SCRUTINY CONTINUES TO BE SEEN BY POLITICAL INSIDERS AS THE PIVOTAL TEST OF SUSPECTED GOE
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PLANS TO CANCEL THE PROCEEDINGS. CONGEN GUAYAQUIL OFFICER SPOKE WITH OFFICIALS AT GUAYAS PROVINCIAL TRIBUNAL ON AUGUST 4 AND WAS NEITHER IMPRESSED WITH THEIR PERSONAL INTEGRITY NOR REASSURED BY THEIR EXPLANATION OF HOW FRAUD MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED THERE OR OF THE EXTENT OF TECHNICAL IRREGULARITIES. THE GUAYAS TRIBUNAL, WHICH IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN ITS OWN SCRUTINY OF THE REGIONAL CONTESTS, IS PROCEEDING AT A SNAIL'S PACE, PRESUMABLY NOT TO TIP THE HAND OF THE SET BEFORE IT STARTS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL TABULATIONS. HOW THE GUAYAS COUNT MIGHT PRACTICALLY AFFECT ROLDOS' FORTUNES, AND ESPECIALLY THE DEGREE OF PROTEST THAT IT PROVOKES APPEARS INCREASINGLY AS THE KEYSTONE OF THE RETORNO PROCESS.
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